

SPECIAL FEATURE (2 OF 12)
MATTHEW SCHNEIDER/LOS ANGELES

FEBRUARY 1, 1978

ACADEMY SPECIAL #2 - THE DIRECTOR: ROBERT WISE
(VOICED PIECE, INSERTS AND INTERVIEW IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: THIS APRIL OF 1978, THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY IS MARKING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "OSCAR" --THE GOLDEN STATUETTE AWARDED EACH YEAR FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE VARIOUS ARTS AND CRAFTS OF FILM MAKING. IN COOPERATION WITH THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURES ARTS AND SCIENCES, VOA IS PRESENTING A SERIES OF SPECIAL INTERVIEWS WITH PROMINENT HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS -- ALL ACADEMY AWARD WINNERS. TODAY'S REPORT, "THE DIRECTOR."

TAPE: CUT ONE -- WISE

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"THE DIRECTOR IS THE -- IN A SENSE, THE TEAM COACH, IF YOU WANT TO GET RIGHT DOWN TO IT. ON A PROJECT WHICH IS STARTED WITH THE SELECTION OF A PROPERTY (STORY, SCRIPT, IDEA) AND THE PREPARATION OF THE SCRIPT, UP TO THE POINT OF GETTING A GROUP TOGETHER TO MAKE IT, THAT CAN BE VERY OFTEN DONE BY A PRODUCER. BUT WHEN THE DIRECTOR COMES TO THE FILM, HE IS THE ONE THAT TAKES OVER THE PROJECT; THE SCRIPT AND THE PLANNING WITH THE PRODUCER AND IS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING GET THE ORGANIZATION TOGETHER WITH THE STAFF, THE CAST, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO HELP YOU MAKE THE FILM. AND THEN, MOST SPECIFICALLY, HE IS THE ONE THAT DAY-TO-DAY DIRECTS BOTH THE ACTORS IN THEIR ROLES IN THE VARIOUS SCENES AND SEQUENCES AS THEY DEVELOP IN THE SHOOTING SCHEDULE, BUT ALSO, OF COURSE, ALL THE STAFF AND CREW, THE TECHNICIANS. HE'S AS MUCH A DIRECTOR OF THOSE, IF NOT MORE, THAN HE IS OF THE ACTORS. SO IT IS THE DIRECTOR WHO IS THE HEAD MAN. THE KEY, THE BOSS WHO RUNS THE SHOW AND THE OPERATION ON THE ACTUAL DAY-TO-DAY FILMING AND SHOOTING OF THE PICTURE."

VOICE: ROBERT WISE, ONE OF HOLLYWOOD'S MOST VERSATILE DIRECTORS. DURING MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS IN THE MOVIES ROBERT WISE HAS DIRECTED VIRTUALLY EVERY KIND OF FILM; SCIENCE FICTION; WAR; HORROR-MELODRAMA; MUSICALS AND DRAMA. HIS CREDITS INCLUDE; "CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE;" "THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL;" "RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP" AND "I WANT TO LIVE." MR. WISE IS A MULTIPLE ACADEMY AWARD WINNER: AS DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER OF "WEST SIDE STORY" AND "THE SOUND OF MUSIC."

VOICE: MR. WISE'S HOLLYWOOD REPUTATION IS THAT OF A VERY ORGANIZED
(CONT'D) DIRECTOR, A MAN WHO DOESN'T LIKE LOOSE ENDS. HE BELIEVES
THAT STRONG EARLY PLANNING IS THE BEST WAY TO AVOID
DISRUPTIVE, COSTLY PROBLEMS. GOOD PLANNING ALSO ENABLES
FILMMAKERS TO CONCENTRATE ON THE VERY SPECIAL TASK OF
CREATING A GOOD MOVIE.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- WISE

"I HAVE TWO CREDOES IN TERMS OF DIRECTING THAT I HAVE FOUND
VERY IMPORTANT IN DEALING WITH THE CREW AS WELL AS ACTORS,
TOO. TWO WORDS: ANTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION. ONE IS
TRYING TO ANTICIPATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AS YOU CAN, ALL
YOUR REQUIREMENTS, ALL YOUR NEEDS IN TERMS OF EVERY
DEPARTMENT, EVERY AREA OF THE FILM, AS YOU GO IN TO SHOOT
EVERY DAY-TO-DAY. AND THE OTHER IS TO BE SURE THAT WHAT
EVER YOU'RE ANTICIPATING AND PLANNING ON, THAT YOU
COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CREW SO THEY KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT,
THEY KNOW WHAT EQUIPMENT TO HAVE THEY KNOW WHAT SPECIAL PROPS
TO HAVE. SO I TRY TO KEEP ALWAYS A STRONG, EARLY LINE OF
COMMUNICATION WITH THE STAFF AND CREW. TO HAVE DIALOGUE.
TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING, WHAT I'M PLANNING ON.
TO DRAW THEM OUT, ONCE AGAIN, IN THEIR SPECIAL AREAS. TO
FIND OUT WHAT SPECIAL THOUGHTS THEY MIGHT HAVE IN TERMS OF
IMPROVING THE AREAS OF THE FILM, THE ONES THEY'RE INVOLVED
IN. I THINK THAT'S THE PROPER WAY AND THE BEST WAY TO GET
THE BEST RESULTS. TO PLAN WELL AHEAD AND LET YOUR CREW KNOW
AND LET YOUR STAFF KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, AND EXCHANGE IDEAS ON
IT."

VOICE: MR. WISE HOLDS WITH THE SAME PHILOSOPHY IN HIS DEALING WITH
THE ACTORS AND ACTRESSES. PLANNING TO GET THE BEST PERFORMANCE
FROM AN ACTOR, HE SAYS, STARTS WITH HIRING THE RIGHT PERSON
FOR THE ROLE HE OR SHE IS TO PLAY. THEN, AFTER ARRIVING AT
WHAT MR. WISE CALLS, "A MEETING OF THE MINDS" ON HOW THE
ROLE SHOULD BE GENERALLY LAYED, HE GIVES THE ACTOR ENOUGH
CREATIVE ROOM TO BRING LIFE TO THE CHARACTER.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- WISE

"I FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT IF YOU SIT ON THE ACTOR TOO MUCH
AND TRY TO IMPOSE YOUR VIEWPOINT OF EVERY MOVE AND OF EVERY
ACTION, EVERY EMOTION IN THE SCENE TO THE ACTOR, YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO GET THE FULL BENEFIT OF WHAT HE (OR SHE) CAN BRING

TAPE: (CON'TD)

TO IT. AFTER ALL, THE ACTOR IS THE ONE THAT'S BRINGING THE PART TO LIFE. IT'S A VERY DIFFERENT THING, I FIND, VERY OFTEN, IN SITTING IN AN OFFICE AND VISUALIZING AND PLANNING AND THINKING WHAT SOMETHING WILL PLAY LIKE, AN PUTTING IT IN THE HANDS OF THE ACTORS AND HAVE IT COME TO LIFE. AND THEY VERY OFTEN DISCOVER THINGS ABOUT THE ROLE I NEVER REALIZED WERE THERE."

VOICE: PATIENCE, SAYS MR. WISE, IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD DIRECTOR. A SECOND IS TO POSSESS AN EXTRA DEGREE OF SENSITIVITY TO THE EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS THAT ARE FOUND ON A MOVIE SET, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE ACTORS. ANOTHER ESSENTIAL, IS A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF ALL THE CRAFTS THAT ARE USE IN MAKING A MOVIE.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- WISE

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"I THINK YOU HAVE TO KNOW YOUR BUSINESS AND WHAT IT'S ABOUT, AND BE ABLE TO PLAN, TO ANTICIPATE AND EXECUTE SUCCESSFULLY. ONE OTHER THING, I THINK, AND THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGSS THAT I THINK I HEAR SAID ABOUT SOME DIRECTORS, AND I THINK IT'S TOO BAD. THEY'RE INDECISIVE. YOU HAVE TO BE DECISIVE AS A DIRECTOR. ALL PICTURES, EVEN THESE BIG MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR ONES, THEY'RE ON BUDGETS AND SCHEDULES, EVEN THOSE TREMENDOUS ONES. IF YOU ARE IMPRECISE AND YOU CANNOT MAKE UP YOUR MIND, DAY AFTER DAY AFTER DAY, ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO, HOW YOU WANT TO APPROACH SOMETHING, AND YOU WASTE TIME AND LOOSE TIME UNNECESSARILY BECAUSE OF YOUR LACK OF BEING ABLE TO MAKE A DECISION, I THINK THAT IS REGRETABLE. I THINK DECISIVENESS, AT A CERTAIN POINT WHEN YOU HAVE TO MOVE AHEAD, IS ONE OF THE ATTRIBUTES YOU MUST HAVE AS A DIRECTOR."

VOICE: MR. WISE SAYS THE MOST REWARDING MOMENT OF A FILM IS WHEN IT IS FINALLY SEEN BY AN AUDIENCE AND THE AUDIENCE LIKES IT.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- WISE

"THE BIGGEST THRILL, THE BIGGEST REWARD IS THE FIRST EXPOSURE TO NOT A MOVIE AUDIENCE (A HOLLYWOOD PREVIEW ATTENDED BY FILM PROFESSIONALS) NOT TO PEOPLE AROUND TOWN, BUT TO AN ACTUAL AUDIENCE OUT THERE IN SAINT LOUIS OR CHICAGO OR MINNEAPOLIS OR SOMEPLACE LIKE THAT AND HAVE YOUR FILM WORK, TO HAVE IT BE VERY SUCCESSFUL. HAVE IT PLAY FOR THAT AUDIENCE AND HAVE IT PLAY WELL; TO GET THE LAUGHS IT SHOULD, HOLD THEM ABSOLUTELY TENSE IN THOSE AREAS THAT IT SHOULD. AND HAVE IT GET A TREMENDOUS HAND (APPLAUSE) AT THE END, OR SOMETHING."

VOICE: "WEST SIDE STORY" AND "THE SOUND OF MUSIC" WERE TWO FILMS
THAT GAVE ROBERT WISE THE IND OF RECEPTION ALL SHOW
BUSINESS PEOPLE LONG FOR.

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- WISE

"THE AUDIENCES LOVED THE FILMS. I WOULD BE HARD-PUT BETWEEN
THOSE TWO TO TELL YOU WHICH WAS THE MOST EXCITING EVENING.
HOWEVER MY BIGGEST PERSONAL THRILL WAS THE EVENING THAT
'WEST SIDE STORY' WON TEN ACADEMY AWARDS AND I WON TWO OF
THEM. AND I WAS PRESENT THEN AND HEARING MY NAME ANNOUNCED
AS WINNER, BOTH FOR THE BEST DIRECTION, WITH JEROME ROBBINS,
AND THEN LATER ON, FOR PRODUCING THE BEST FILM. YOU KNOW,
TWICE GOING UP THE STAGE FOR THE OSCARS. THAT WAS MY
BIGGEST NIGHT."

VOICE: DIRECTOR ROBERT WISE.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN THE SECOND IN A SERIES OF SPECIAL REPORTS BASED
ON CONVERSATIONS WITH AMERICAN FILMMAKERS, ON THE OCCASSION
OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF "OSCAR" THE ANNUAL AWARD OF
THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

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